



NEWSLINER

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September 28, 2007

Kelly Singleton, Editor

Re-Establishing our Educational Leadership

This is the second installment of a three part Newsliner series exploring the CFT Strategic Plan

One of the many things that attracted me to Cincinnati Public Schools as the place I wanted to work as a teacher was the fact that many excellent teachers worked in this district and I knew that if I was serious about being a good educator this was the place to be. I am not the only person to have recognized this fact. Many educators, union leaders and education analysts around the country have long recognized the teachers of Cincinnati Public to be among the most professional and accomplished in the nation. It is not an accident that we have more National Board Certified teachers than any district in the state of Ohio and that we rank near the top in the nation. The CFT actually played an important role in the founding of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and in fact, our past president, Tom Mooney, sat on the Board of Directors of the National Board until his death last year. The CFT pushed long and hard over the years to professionalize teaching by promoting National Board Certification for our members and to get those efforts recognized in our contract by rewarding those teachers who made the extra effort through certification stipends and a career ladder that encouraged excellent teachers to stay in teaching. Our union also promoted teacher leadership through our contract by establishing union management decision-making bodies that are still emulated or admired by many school districts around the country.

This is a history of educational leadership to be proud of but it is also a history that goes largely unrecognized in this city. It seems that Cincinnati has a penchant for focusing on the negative by firmly holding on to the

myth that nothing good or worthwhile can come from our town. It does not seem to matter that we are the highest achieving large urban school district in Ohio and among the highest achieving urban districts in the nation. Last year our teachers made possible the highest urban high school graduation rate in the state (over 79%). No other urban district came close to this number. This is a testament to the dedication and leadership our teachers have shown in the face of difficult circumstances. We have proven that our children can, when given the right opportunities, succeed. Bear in mind that our students and teachers accomplished this in the context of a city that was recently declared the third poorest city in the nation and yet we still cannot get the local recognition this achievement deserves.

We have proven that we are leaders in the classroom but it seems that we still have to prove that we are educational leaders in our community. For too long now our community has allowed people with little educational expertise or knowledge to pose as experts on education when it comes to shaping public opinion. And by and large these voices have mercilessly attacked and ridiculed our achievements. It rests upon us to change that public perception because the future of our schools depends on our ability to effectively communicate the quality of our work and educational expertise. This is not an easy task. It will require us to work hard at maintaining and, in many cases, rebuilding the shared governance structures we fought so hard to win in our bargaining agreement because this is the foundation of our success. It will also require us to engage with the larger community in a very pub-

lic way to get the message out that, while we are not satisfied with the student achievement in Cincinnati Public, we are very proud of what we have accomplished. There are many things that need to improve in our district and we know it but we also know that we are accomplishing more than any other school system working with similar populations of children. It is time that the rest of Cincinnati recognizes this fact.

So, when we look at this strategic goal to re-establish our educational leadership it means we must do this inside our schools and out in the community. As teachers we are important members of the community and we should not shy away from promoting the good we do and we should not let anyone get away with unfairly critiquing our efforts. It is up to us to change public attitudes because we know the enemies of public education work overtime to distort our record. In many ways this is one of the hardest tasks we face as teachers because we already work very long hours and endure less than ideal and sometimes extremely tough working conditions. The bottom line in all of this, however, is that we are the educational leaders in this community and it is time we get that message across to the public. Keep up your good and important work. You are making a difference in the lives of the children of Cincinnati.

In Solidarity,

Tim Kraus

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★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
 ★ The next CFT/ ★
 ★ ACPSOP member- ★
 ★ ship meeting will be ★
 ★ held on **October** ★
 ★ **10 @ 5:00 p.m.** at ★
 ★ the Thom Moore ★
 ★ Building. **YES ON** ★
 ★ **22 RALLY TO BE** ★
 ★ **HELD AT 4:00** ★
 ★ **PRIOR TO THE** ★
 ★ **MEETING** ★
 ★ BR briefing is held ★
 ★ after the member- ★
 ★ ship meeting. ★
 ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Contract Corner



This issue of Contract Corner addresses contract language surrounding Special Education classrooms, and can be found in §610.1.b, pg 59-60 in the current CBA.

“The number of students served in or assigned to a special education classroom period/teacher or a preschool disability class/teacher shall not exceed the limits set by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). Currently, ODE limits are:

Disability Category Assigned	Maximum Number to be Served by School Level		Maximum Number to be Served During Instructional Period		Age Range per Instructional Period Shall Not Exceed
	Elementary, Middle	High School	Elementary, Middle	High School	
Cognitive Disabilities	16	24	12	16	60 Months
Specific Learning Disabilities	16	24	12	12	60 Months
HI, VI, OI, OHI	10	10	8	8	48 Months
ED*	12	12	10	10	48 Months
MD**	8	8	(8)	(8)	60 Months
AU/DB/TBI**	6	6	6	6	60 Months
Multiple Categories (Formally Cross Categorical)	16	24	***	***	Not Specified

*Requires plan for classroom management and crisis intervention support. In the absence of a plan, at least one full-time paraprofessional is required in each special class.

** At least one full-time paraprofessional is required in each special class.

*** See weighted instructional formula”, pg 60 CBA.

Bottom line is there should not be any overloaded Intervention Specialists.

STRS HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION INITIATIVE By Dean Dennis

The STRS and the Health Care Advocates have joined forces in lobbying for legislation to help resolve the health care funding crisis faced by our retirement system. In five short years, a single retiree’s health care premium has risen from \$70 a month to \$163 a month. Even more shocking, just a few years ago STRS Ohio entertained getting out of the health care business altogether. It was during this time the Health Care Advocates was born. The late Tom Mooney was a driving force behind the formation of this group. The group sought to rally all stakeholders in finding a solution to the crisis and is strongly sup-



STATE TEACHERS
RETIREMENT SYSTEM
OF OHIO

ported by both OFT and OEA. The group’s action has finally brought together a proposed solution in 2007. However, the solution will require the passing of a controversial piece of legislation. This legislation has yet to be introduced but is gaining momentum. What is at stake is viable and affordable health care for retired teachers.

Employee and employer contribution rates are set by law and currently are 10% and 14% respectively. The STRS and Health Care Advocates are seeking legislation that allows a total of an additional 5% to be phased in over a five-year period. The phase in would be shared

equally between the employee and employer at the rate of ½ % each, per year, until the 5% total is reached. Why is this needed? Simply put, with the increasing costs of health care, STRS does not have enough monies to provide quality health care and a quality pension plan without more revenue. The Advocates and STRS think this legislation can maintain our current monthly medical payments for retirees with current level of health care coverage without impacting pension levels for a 30-year period. Without it, the health care stabilization fund is projected to run dry in 8 years and we will be back to square one regarding medical benefits.

CORRECTION!!!!!!

In the last Newsliner (Issue 4-2, dated 9-21-07), the article titled **Prep Time & Planning Time**, by Donnie Luckie, a section of the contract was misquoted. The sentence read: *Elementary K-8 teachers shall be assigned preparation and/or conference time of 225 minutes per week (Section 220 Teaching assignments, p. 27).* The correct language reads: *Elementary K-8 teachers shall be assigned preparation and/or conference time of 255 minutes per week.*

What Can I Do If There Are Problems With My Comprehensive Evaluation?

By Lesley-Ann Gracey, Professional Issues Representative

The Teacher Evaluation System was jointly created by teachers and administrators and CFT has been working hard to continue to refine the system to make it more understandable to all teachers. When it is completely phased in, every teacher will have a formative evaluation every year and a summative evaluation every five years. There are many safeguards built in to continually work to make it fair and unbiased. All parties must be held to the same standards – the teachers being evaluated, the peer evaluators and the administrators.

If there are problems in the process of the evaluation, the building representative or a CFT field representative may file a grievance. You may grieve the following:

1. No Evaluation Orientation Meeting was held.
2. The required number of evaluations were not done.
3. The observation was not of “sufficient length to justify the conclusions reached”.
4. Deadlines were not met.
5. “Each teacher shall be given a copy of all report forms and supportive documents forthwith, following each observation. Assessments, including classroom observation summaries, must remain confidential and must be delivered in a sealed envelope.” CBA 210. 10
6. “The evaluator shall demonstrate or have demonstrated teaching techniques in the teacher’s class or in a classroom situation with comparable instructional needs upon the request of the teacher.” CBA 210. 1e
7. In a comprehensive evaluation, the administrative evaluation must be announced and one of the peer evaluator’s observation must be announced.

Throughout the evaluation cycle, there are many ways in which a teacher may clarify, reflect upon and explain the evidence that was recorded during the observation.

1. **Is there anything I need to know about today’s observation?** At the end of the observation the teacher may provide the evaluator with any additional information that he/she feels is necessary. If the situation allows for oral feedback at this point, the teacher should clarify any issues that arose during the observation. If that is not possible orally, the teacher may email this information to the evaluator within 24 hours of the observation. This should be printed and stapled to the observation or if given orally, written in the “additional observations/evidence” section of the evaluation. This is

where you would share with the evaluator things like “I wanted you to know that Sherri had her head down and did not participate because we just got a call saying her grandmother who had been in the hospital had passed away and her mother would be there in an hour to pick her up. I wanted her to be here in the classroom and not to sit alone in the office.”

2. The **Evidence of Reflection** is due within five working days. This form has both specific and general questions to prompt reflection on the lesson observed. It is important that this be an honest and accurate reflection of what occurred in the classroom. This isn’t about what you wanted to happen, but rather evidence of what did happen and what you think about it. You can receive evaluative language at the distinguished level by writing about an unsuccessful lesson and clearly examining what happened as well as thoughtfully and accurately reflecting on levels of student engagement, lesson effectiveness and future instruction. The reflection form is the basis for scoring Domain 1 (1.1 and 1.3).
3. **“Copies of all evaluation materials shall be furnished to the teacher prior to placement in the teacher’s personnel file. The teacher shall have the right to attach a written comment to the report.” CBA 210 1.p** Since this is an evidence-based system, the evidence contained in the report must support the scores given. It is important that you analyze your evaluative language in each element after each observation. If you believe a discrepancy exists, please contact your evaluator to discuss your concerns. If an amicable agreement can not be reached regarding the evaluative language of your observation then the next step is to write a rebuttal. You may write a rebuttal to each observation that includes a reasoned argument about why the evidence does not support the evaluative language given. The rebuttal will be stapled to your observation report and becomes part of your evaluation. If at the end of the comprehensive evaluation process you choose to appeal your final summary scores/ratings the rebuttals will be included in your appeal.
4. At the end of the Comprehensive Evaluation Process, you will receive a final summary cover sheet with a score/rating in each domain. To arrive at the domain scores, the evaluator followed a procedure for assigning the level of performance:

- a) Gathered the evidence
- b) Aligned the gathered evidence with the correct TES standard and element
- c) Sorted the script by element
- d) Based on the preponderance of evidence gathered for the element, assign the element a level of performance (distinguished, proficient, basic or unsatisfactory)
- e) Based on the preponderance of evidence gathered for the element across all the evaluations and the pattern created (growth over time, no growth over time, negative growth over time) a domain score is assigned.
- f) The evaluator then adds the total number of points in each domain by adding together all the element scores in the domain. Go to Tab 10 in the TES binder and look at the domain score computation table to compute the final domain score.

At the end of the comprehensive evaluation process, if you believe that the evidence presented in the observation reports do not support the element scores, and thus the domain scores given, the “Teacher may appeal the scores in Domains 1, 2,3, and 4 by sending a written request for review to Human Resources within 10 working days of receiving the final scores on the comprehensive evaluation. The TES Appeals Panel shall review the documentation and determine if the evidence supports the scores given...If not, the Appeals Panel will review the evidence and provide new scores.” CBA 210 1.q

To prepare your appeal, you must develop a coherent argument from rebuttals, reflections and evidence presented in the observation reports that the preponderance of evidence does not support one or more domain scores given. Your observation reports are given to you in chronological order, but you can also request that they be sorted by element and domain so that you can much more easily evaluate the evidence for each element and domain.

Once your request for appeal has been received by HR, it is forwarded to the TES facilitator who blacks out all names and sends it to the appeals panel. The panel reads the observation reports blind and then scores the observation reports based on the evidence in the reports. Then these scores are compared to the original scores. If the scores improve, the new scores will be given. If the scores were lowered, the original scores will stand. The teacher will be informed of the decision of the appeals panel in a timely manner.

Obtaining a Continuing Contract

By Lesley-Ann Gracey, Professional Issues Rep

Due to significant reductions in student enrollment, CPS has been forced to reduce our teaching force by 107 Teachers. Should the student population continue to decline, RIFing may occur in subsequent years. Contractually, "For the purpose of reductions in a position classification, teachers with limited contracts shall be considered before those with continuing contracts."

In order to obtain a continuing contract, you must hold a valid eight-year Professional Ohio Teaching Certificate or a five-year Professional License. You must also complete a Comprehensive Evaluation placing you at the career level (3's in all four domains) or higher. Following the completion of all qualifications, continuing contract status becomes effective at the beginning of the next academic year.

Once you have a five year Professional License, you must renew it every five years by completing an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP). Six semester hours OR nine quarter hours OR 18 CEU's (180 contact hours) OR a combination thereof is required in order to renew your license. By your second renewal, you must have a Master's degree or 30 semester hours or graduate credit. Those who held certificates under the previous standards are exempt from the Masters degree or 30 semester hours requirement for the second renewal. If you already have your Master's degree, you need 6 semester hours OR 18 CEU's (180 contact hours) OR a combination thereof.

Should you have any questions concerning the process to obtain continuing contract status or any other professional issues, contact Lesley-Ann Gracey, Professional Issues Representative, 475-6042.

Science Curriculum Council Meeting October 16th 4-6 p.m. Sunrock Farm

All Science teachers are invited to attend the Science Curriculum Council at Sunrock Farm on Tuesday, October 16th from 4-6 p.m.

We will see, first hand, the farm's operation and learn how their programs address the Ohio Science Standards.

Come prepared to take a hike/walk in the creek and talk to other Science Educators.

Please RSVP to Lesly Briedis by e-mail at briedil@cps-k12.org and include the grade level you teach.

ELA Curriculum Council Meeting October 16th 4-6 pm ILC Mayerson

The ELA Council is addressing the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Professional Development. The September meeting included an overview of WAC by Sonia Milrod, Mayerson, for the teachers who are being inserviced in math. The October meeting will include a presentation by Leslie King regarding writing in the Voyager program. Future meetings will include presentations on doing research and citations with students, model lessons, and integration with other Councils.

All teachers are invited to attend the meetings. We meet at the ILC in Mayerson. Teachers need to register at MyPD to receive 1 CEU.

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